

Angelica at the San Diego Workforce Partnership Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program

During the summer of 2010, Angelica was almost a year into her unemployment benefits. She had lost her job in property management due to misinterpretation of the California Labor Code regarding breastfeeding while working. Productivity was always the name of her game, and during her unemployment she found herself slipping further and further into a depression that left her sitting on the couch doing absolutely nothing. Her husband's grandmother called her and told her about a grant she had heard about that would pay for studies in the medical field, but she did not know any specifics.

Angelica began looking online for this grant and somehow stumbled across a phone number for information. After a few phone transfers, she was connected with Cindy Perry, the director of the San Diego Workforce Partnership's Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance.

Angelica was excited to have something to look forward to, but it turned out that the grant was still in the works and nowhere near ready for disbursement. Angelica asked what she could do in the meantime and was told to think about what she would like to do. She called back a month later with her list and was advised to go on tours of schools and choose the one she liked (the grantee didn't even know the dollar amount of the grant yet), so Angelica went on some tours. A month later she called with her list of favorites and was told that the grant was not ready yet.

Her persistence opened the door for her to be the first one to complete an application and a personal assessment with Cindy. Her scores were great, and she left with paperwork in hand. Her next stop was UEI College, where, when she told them she had qualified for the HPOG program, her enrollment began.

Angelica had always been a great student and had worked since she was 15. Unemployment had placed her in an emotional/mental state she had never experienced before, one where dreams, goals, and aspirations fell by the wayside. Angelica was unrecognizable to herself, and she had two little ones who needed her. She could not afford to just roll into a little ball and disappear. This grant gave her a reason to get up and get dressed. Her experience at UEI ended with an externship at a company where she was ultimately hired after 30 days. She has been employed for a little over a year now and is thankful for the grandmother who thought to share her knowledge of this grant.

Angelica's first paycheck at this new job came one week after her last unemployment check. Talk about a blessing! One fringe benefit of having worked with this HPOG program is that it lit the fire that had once burned regarding her education. Angelica will continue her education and strive for excellence!

